

Warships from 13 countries including those of India, Australia and Japan arrived in the eastern Chinese port city of Qingdao on Sunday to attend a naval parade as a goodwill visit.

Beijing will mark 70 years, since the founding of the Chinese People's Liberation Army Navy, where it will show-off the latest warships including Chinese nuclear submarines and destroyers at a major review in the waters off Qingdao.

As reported by Reuters, one diplomatic source with direct knowledge said it was 13 countries in total - and the PLA is extending its best forward to welcome them.

Odd & Evens - Taiwan Strait

New Delhi, which has been at odds with Beijing over its support for Pakistan-based terror group JeM and its leader Masood Azhar, has sent stealth guided-missile destroyer "INS Kolkata" to participate, along with a supply ship.

"We bring to you one of the excellent ships that we have made. It is the pride of the nation and the Indian navy, and we are very delighted to be here," Captain Aditya Hara told reporters on the dockside after arriving in Qingdao.

According to the reports, a source familiar with the situation told INS Kolkata had sailed through the Taiwan Strait to get to Qingdao, a sensitive waterway that separates China from self-ruled Taiwan and claimed by Beijing as one of its sacred Chinese territories.

"We headed on a direct route and we are very glad that we were facilitated by the PLA Navy and they ensured that we had a safe passage to Qingdao," the Indian captain said when asked if they had sailed via the Taiwan Strait.

HMAS Melbourne

Australia, one of the members of the proposed quads in the Pacific, has sent the "HMAS Melbourne" guided-missile frigate to Qingdao, though Australian officials declined to make the captain available for any media interview.

Relations between both countries have recently soured over Australian accusations of Chinese interference in the country's politics and Canberra's banning of Chinese Huawei

Technologies Co Ltd from supplying equipment for its planned 5G broadband network.

Japanese Navy Ship in Chinese waters



Japanese Destroyer in Qingdao/Image: Published in Swissinfo

Tokyo has also sent a destroyer to Qingdao, in the first visit of a navy ship in Chinese waters since 2011, according to Japanese media reports.

Relations between the world's second and third-largest economies have been irked by a long-running territorial dispute over a group of East China Sea islets and recently created mistrust in China about Japanese Prime Minister Abe's efforts to amend Japan's pacifist constitution.

However, both the parties are trying move ahead, with Abe visiting Beijing in last October when both countries pledged to forge closer ties and signed a broad range of agreements including a \$30 billion currency swap pact.

Pakistan - not on the list

The other countries taking part include Russia and three South East Asian countries which have sparred with China over competing claims in the disputed waters of the South China Sea: Vietnam, Malaysia and the Philippines.

Pakistan, an all-weather Chinese ally, is not on the list of countries, officials have provided which are sending their ships to the Qingdao.

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